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EIS002176

CITIZENS AWARENESS NETWORK

March 19, 2000

Mr. William J. Boyle
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
P.O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas, Nevada 89036-0307

Re: CAN's comments on the proposed rule 10 CFR 963 and draft environmental impact statement for Yucca Mountain

Dear Mr. Boyle:

By this letter, the Citizens Awareness Network formally submits comments on the proposed rule and draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) governing the siting of a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. CAN is a volunteer, grassroots organization with chapters in reactor communities in MA, CT, VT and NY. We have over 2,000 supporting members and believe we represent the views of many thousands more.

The Rule

1 We believe this rule is fundamentally flawed in that it eliminates "individual disqualifiers" for the Yucca Mountain Siting Guidelines. If your department fails to specify factors that will disqualify Yucca Mountain as a suitable repository site, we fear that that your agency will approve Yucca Mountain for political reasons regardless of serious flaws.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement

2 We believe that the DEIS for Yucca Mountain is unacceptable for a number of reasons. Saturation of the Yucca Mountain repository is possible given numerous scientific findings including the detection of atmospheric bomb testing nuclides at repository depths and the inconsistent groundwater levels near the site. The DEIS must be rewritten to include the environmental impact of groundwater infiltration and saturation.

3 The DEIS must investigate in a more realistic manner the possible outcome should Yucca Mountain be found unacceptable for a geologic repository and the irradiated fuel rods must remain onsite for an indefinite length of time, likely under the control of utilities. Given that most of our members live and work in reactor communities, we believe this onsite scenario warrants a pragmatic and detailed investigation with regard to the stewardship of irradiated fuel and environmental impacts. To dismiss onsite storage as an unlikely scenario is irrational given the circumstances.

4 The DEIS must evaluate the environmental justice issues regarding the fact that Yucca Mountain belongs to the Western Shoshone people through the Ruby Valley treaty. Your agency's willingness to dismiss environmental justice concerns where investigation is so clearly warranted is extremely disquieting.

5 The DEIS, using the most current information available, must clearly and accurately characterize the exposure risks and costs involved during routine shipments along actual transportation routes, as well as for transportation accidents. Furthermore, the infrastructure of each state to deal with both routine shipments and potential accidents must be evaluated.

6 Lastly, we reject the DEIS based on the fact that your agency failed to hold a hearing in the Northeast even though at least one quarter of the nation's nuclear reactors are sited here and our region will become a heavily traveled high-level radioactive waste corridor. We formally request that a hearing be held in each state in which we have Citizen Awareness Network chapters (MA, CT, NY and VT) before this or any other DEIS on Yucca Mountain be accepted.

7 Both the rule and the DEIS, as written, fail to provide the regulatory frame work and means to access all plausible environmental impacts required to insure the safe, environmentally just, long-term storage of our nation's high-level nuclear waste. Both the rule and the DEIS needs to be withdrawn and rewritten to include the issues specified above.

Sincerely,

Deb Katz ^{es}

Deb Katz
Executive Director